Ray Loses Appeal In Escape Case

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — The Tennessee Supreme Court has refused to hear James Earl Ray's appeal of his conviction for escaping from Brushy Mountain Prison in 1977.

In a one-sentence memorandum, the high court said the Court of Criminal Appeals reached the correct decision in affirming Ray's conviction in Morgan County Criminal Court in October 1977.

Ray, serving a 99-year term for the 1968 murder of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., was sentenced to an additional one to two years in prison for the June 10, 1977, breakout.

He and six other inmates used a makeshift ladder to climb over the prison's walls. All were recaptured in the woods surrounding the prison within the next three days, Ray after 54 hours.

Ray said in the appeal that the trial for escape amounted to double jeopardy since he already had been punished for the break following an in-prison administrative hearing.